

How does the Merced River Plan work?



- The plan guides future activities in the Merced River corridor.
- Its seven management elements work together to protect and enhance the Merced River's unique values.

BOUNDARIES define the areas to be managed within the maximum quarter-mile corridor allowed by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. River values in Yosemite are protected inside—and outside—of all established boundaries.

CLASSIFICATIONS are assigned to segments of the river corridor and describe the existing level of development in that area. Classifications are applied as *Wild*, *Scenic*, or *Recreational*.

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES is a term that comes directly from the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These are unique river-related qualities that set the Merced apart from all other rivers in the nation—making it worthy of designation as a Wild and Scenic River. Outstanding values of the river can include recreational, biological, cultural, scenic, geological, hydrological, and scientific values.

MANAGEMENT ZONES are applied to each river segment and outline the kinds—and levels—of activities and facilities one might expect in a given area. There are Wilderness zones, Diverse Visitor Experience zones in day use areas, and Developed zones where buildings, lodging, or camping facilities might be located. Zoning is depicted on maps in brightly colored swatches.

THE RIVER PROTECTION OVERLAY is a buffer area that allows for the additional protection and restoration of natural processes within and directly adjacent to the river.

SECTION 7 DETERMINATION PROCESS is a procedure called for in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. It ensures that projects within the bed and banks of the river do not directly or adversely affect river values.

USER CAPACITY PROGRAM manages the amounts of use allowed within the river corridor. The Merced River Plan, as amended, measures use and protects river values through existing tools—including the Wilderness Trailhead Quota System and other park regulations in place for decades—in addition to the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) program.